

REMARKS

In response to the objection, the Abstract has been amended so as to be in the form of a single paragraph.

In response to the claim objection, amended claims 1 and 2 and new claims 25-28 presented for examination are all independent claims.

In response to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, the molecular weight in amended claims 1 and 2 has been defined as a number average molecular weight.

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 and the claim objection and objection to the Abstract is respectfully requested.

Review and reconsideration on the merits are requested.

Claims 1-3, 6-8 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,237,049 to Cavanaugh et al., Akihiko et al. (JP 06-080733) or Ohtani et al. (EP 472,908 A2). Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,680,124 to Araki et al. in view of Cavanaugh et al., Akihiko et al. or Ohtani et al. Claims 4, 5, 9, 10 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cavanaugh et al., Akihiko et al. or Ohtani et al., each individually in view of Araki et al.

Applicants respond as follows.

Preliminarily, claim 12 (amended to product-by-process format), is directed to the subject matter (fluoropolymer composition) of Group I elected for prosecution.

The method of amended claims 1, 2 and 25-28 comprises the steps of removing oligomers by extruding the fluorine-containing ethylenic polymer obtained by polymerization using an extruder having a vent mechanism equipped with a pressure reducing device. In this

manner, a fluoropolymer can be produced having a content of oligomers within the claimed range.

The interlaminar bond strength can be further stabilized in cases where a fluoropolymer obtained by the present invention is bonded to an organic material. See page 8, line 21-page 9, line 11 of the present specification.

On the other hand, none of Cavanaugh et al., Akihiko et al., Ohtani et al. and Araki et al. disclose the claimed step.

For the above reason, it is respectfully submitted that the amended claims are neither anticipated nor obvious over the cited prior art, and withdrawal of the foregoing rejections is respectfully requested.

Applicants further comment on the claim amendments as follows.

The production method of the amended claims is described at page 9, line 34-page 10, line 2 of the specification.

Amended claims 1 and 2 include the limitation of claim 7, new claims 25 and 26 include the combination of claims 1 and 8 and claims 2 and 8, respectively, and new claims 27 and 28 include the combination of claims 1 and 10 and claims 2 and 10, respectively.

As noted above with respect to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, "molecular weight" has been changed to read "number average molecular weight." Support is found at page 47, lines 13-15 of the specification.

In claims 1, 2 and 25-28, the description of the oligomer content has been clarified. Claims 7-10 have been canceled.

In the event that the Examiner believes that it may be helpful to advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number indicated below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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